

Official Organ Central Labor Union; endorsed by State Federation of Labor

# The Charlotte Labor Journal

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## ANOTHER MILESTONE PASSES IN HISTORY OF LABOR

LABOR DAY, 1935



By WILLIAM GREEN,  
President, American Federation of Labor

An achievement of the past years constitutes a fundamental gain that gives to wage-earners the key to self progress. For decades society has recognized that the union was the wage-earner's method of increasing his income and raising his standards of living, but never until Section 7 (a) of the National Recovery Act was made law did society put his right into legal form. When employers refused to conform to law, Labor asked that the government be authorized to assume responsibility for preventing employers from interfering with Labor's right to organize in unions and bargaining collectively through representatives of their own choosing. This was written into the National Labor Relations Act.

Although judges may do their best to restrict the number of workers to whom this law will apply, the federal government has made this important declaration of policy for whatever area of labor relations the federal courts may permit to come under its jurisdiction.

It is now a generally accepted policy that government shall protect rights growing out of ownership of property. This was a more obvious obligation necessary to basic order in society. The time is now overdue for government to assume responsibility for assuring to men and women rights as human beings so that their welfare may have at least equal consideration with wealth and the products of labor. There is involved in this issue which Labor has raised, the key to the future of our nation. It proposed that society offer even-handed opportunity for those who invest creative labor with those who invest capital. The progress and the enduring development of our nation depend upon the acceptance by our government of its responsibility for human welfare. An avowed purpose of our government is to promote the general welfare and Congress is given power to lay and collect taxes to provide for the general welfare. This together with its power to regulate commerce between the states is the basis for Labor's belief that the federal government has legal power to legislate for social welfare. We know that the moral and economic need for such legislation puts still further obligation upon Congress. Industries now organized upon a national basis, buying their crude materials from any source in the nation and selling in a world market are in no sense local institutions. They can escape any regulation not national in scope. Unless regulated, cut-throat competition brings sweat shop labor conditions. The welfare of our 49 million persons gainfully employed by business enterprises depends on whether society places a restraining hand on business struggle for profits for the few and forces more equitable division of returns from joint work.

Our Supreme Court has recently rebuked Congress and the Administration for their attempts to build up national regulation of work conditions and trade practices. They interpreted the Constitution so as to limit sharply the scope of interstate commerce and virtually to deny Congress the power to legislate for social welfare. But, as the Chief Justice has truly declared, "The Constitution is what the courts say it is"—until the Sovereign Nation speaks.

Once before when the Supreme Court blocked the path of human welfare by the Dred Scott decision, the nation wiped out that decision. It cost human blood and life and for years has blighted the economic progress of our southern states. We hope to solve our present constitutional problem by less costly methods. Greater familiarity with labor and regulation of industry for social purposes. The Sovereign Nation must also establish its method of overruling any governmental authority that blocks social progress.

This is the problem which presses for Labor's solution equally with that of organizing all wage and salaried workers in strong labor unions. Organized power is the first fundamental in progress for the welfare of all who work.

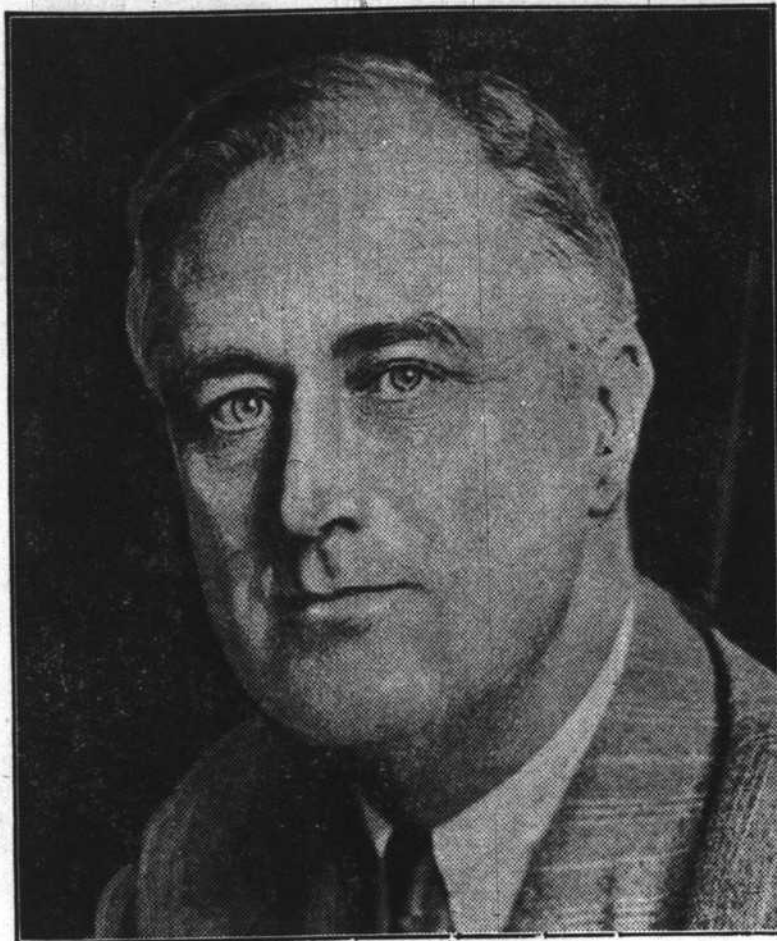
Labor Day, 1935, finds progress in both the political and union organization fields. There are problems but none that cannot be solved by courage and the will to find a solution. Wage-earners must first rally together in unions to fight against unfair wages and hours and to set up the machinery through which they may have representation and voice in deciding issues that affect their interests.

The year ahead presents the challenge of great opportunities.

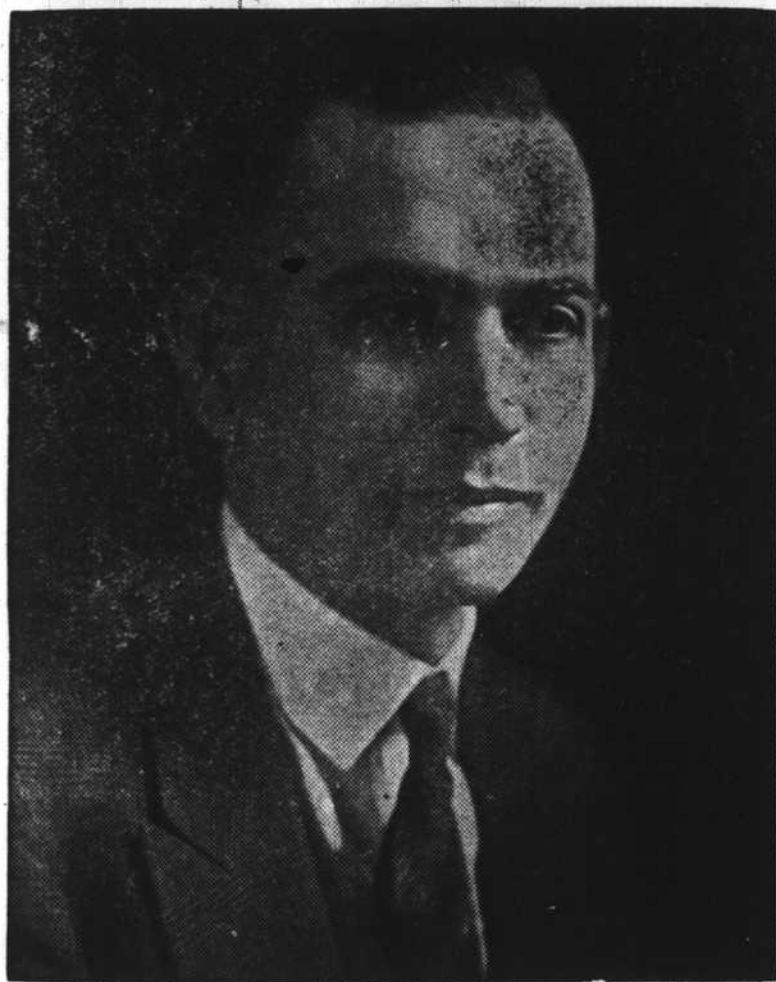
### UNION LABEL DEPT. ENDORSES LABOR PRESS

At the annual meeting of the Executive Board of the Union Label Trades Department, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

"RESOLVED, That the Union Label Trades Department express its gratitude for the loyal co-operation and hearty support of the weekly Labor newspapers and the monthly Labor Journals for their generous display of publicity for the Union Label, Shop Card and Button."



FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT  
President of the United States, and a Friend of Labor

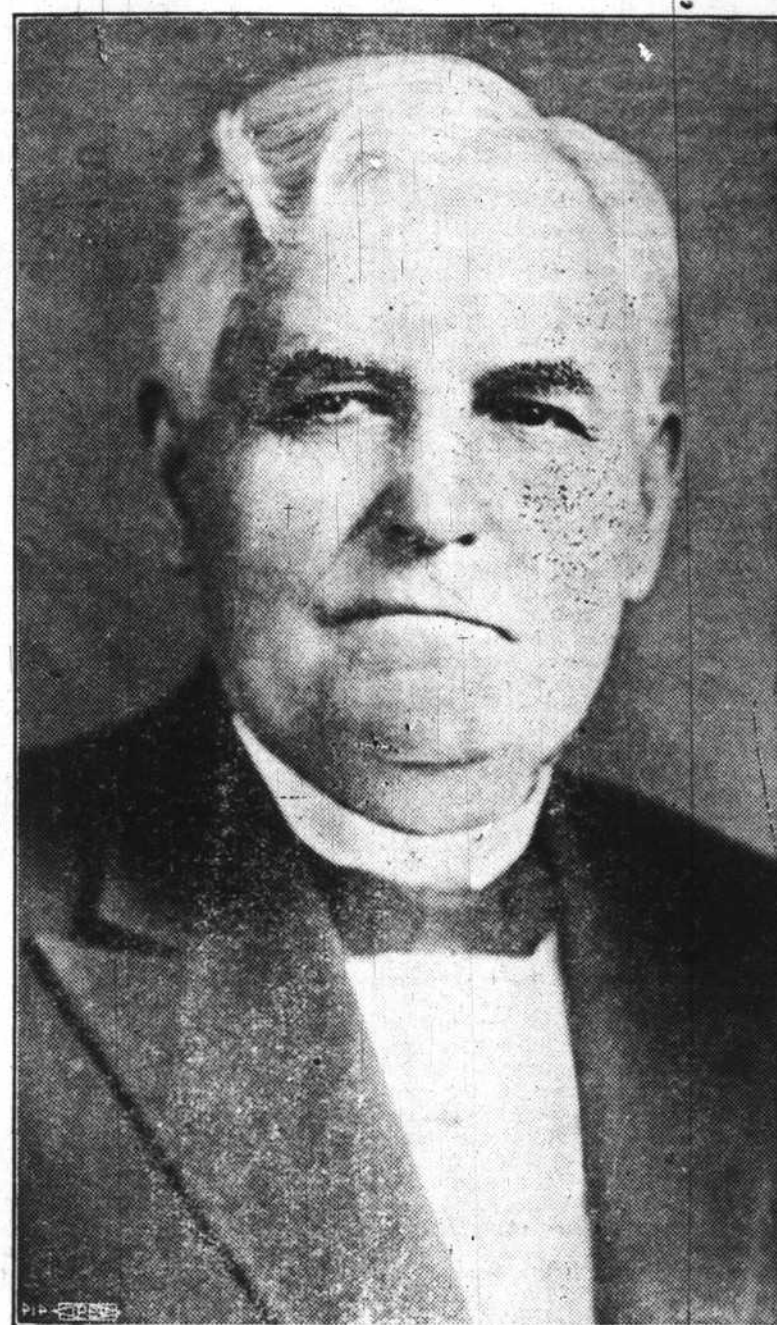


R. R. LAWRENCE  
President North Carolina State Federation of Labor



FRANK BARR  
President Charlotte Central Labor Union

LABOR DAY, 1935



By FRANK MORRISON,  
Secretary, American Federation of Labor

National holidays in America call attention to remind us of one particular advance by wage workers but rather to attract us to their problems, their triumphs and their wrongs.

The wider acceptance of Trade Union viewpoint on social and industrial questions is noted on this Labor Day.

The new public attitude toward labor displacing machinery is also significant. Workers were formerly assured they could find other employment and the new industries and wants automatically care for those who have been displaced by machinery and scientific processes.

The new Industrial Revolution, however, operates in new industries as well as established industries. Low wage jobs, such as employment at gas filling stations and mass production industries is no solution for unemployment of highly skilled workers and well-paid creative labor who have been displaced by automatic processes that are yet in their infancy.

Organized labor declares that old standards of wage and hours must be rejected. The 10, 9 and 8 hour workday and the living wage theory are obsolete.

The imagination and courage of inventors and scientists must be guided into the field of distribution and labor's demands for shorter hours and still higher and higher wages be supported.

Society, for its own well-being, must be conscious of the need of the distribution of the wealth that has been created by machinery and scientific processes.

It is often claimed that the trade union movement demands equal pay regardless of work performed. Organized labor has a minimum wage. If the union is strong, the employer is not permitted to go below that living line. That minimum is based on the trade conditions, necessities and the standard of living of the workers involved. Exceptionally skilled workers receive higher scales of pay, but in most trades that is arranged between the worker and the employer, outside of the union minimum scale.

Our opponents refuse to accept this situation. They refuse to take our minimum as a base and grade up. They would have our maximum, their highest point, and from that they would grade down. Logically this system leads us back to the sweat shop, and places labor at the whim of the employer.

Labor is not a trust. By its nature this is impossible. One of its greatest expenses is organizing, and educating non-union workers to the benefits of trade unionism. A trust consists of a comparatively few who control solely for purpose of profit. The union is not organized for profit.

Labor demands a five-day week, a six-hour day and a wage that will enable a man and his family to live in reasonable comfort.

### MILLIONS IN TRADE UNION BENEFITS

Trade union benefits to help union men and women through the trying periods of unemployment, sickness and old age and provide their families with assistance when death calls for the breadwinners are among the outstanding protective measures which organized labor gives to its members.

A national summary of these benefits, totaling millions of dollars, is included in the annual reports which the Executive Council of American Federation of Labor makes to the Federation annual conventions. Incomplete data for 1934 already in the hands of the A. F. of L. indicate that organized labor continues to regard these benefits as an integral part of trade union structure.

The large extent of these benefit services was strikingly shown in the summary for 1933 which the Executive Council reported to the 1934 convention.

Out of 114 standard national and international unions 90 reported the payment of some of the regular forms of benefits. The total amount paid by all the unions reporting was \$40,692,112.72, classified as follows:

Death benefits, \$14,780,206.42; sick benefits, \$1,665,265.75; unemployment benefits, \$13,784,042.87; old-age benefits, \$4,678,636.41; disability benefits, \$4,837,730.42; miscellaneous, \$946,230.85.

Nine unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor reported having paid benefits in excess of half a million dollars each. The names of the organizations and the amounts follow:

International Typographical Union, \$3,668,040.71; International Photo-Engravers' Union of North America, \$1,743,195.13; United Mine Workers of America, \$1,000,000; Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America, \$997,394.31; International Stereotypers and Electrotypers' Union of North America, \$882,490.37; United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters of the United States and Canada, \$748,071; International Printing Pressmen's and Assistant's Union of North America, \$617,794.67; International Molders Union of North America, \$603,720.44; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers of America, \$522,952.34.

Although the total benefits paid by the smaller unions do not run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars which characterize the outlays of the larger unions, the individual benefits to relieve distress among their members are equally as important as the benefits granted by the big organizations.

The long record of benefits paid by American trade unions demonstrates that the program of the organized labor movement includes more than wages hours and work conditions.